



BILLING CODE 6717-01-P

DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC

Docket No. PF12-6-000

NOTICE OF INTENT TO PREPARE AN  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE PLANNED  
**LINE MB LOOP EXTENSION PROJECT**,  
REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES,  
AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

The staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC or Commission) will prepare an environmental assessment (EA) that will discuss the environmental impacts of the Line MB Loop<sup>1</sup> Extension (Line MB) involving construction and operation of facilities by Columbia Gas Transmission, LLC (Columbia) in Baltimore and Harford Counties, Maryland. This EA will be used by the Commission in its decision-making process to determine whether the project is in the public convenience and necessity.

This notice announces the opening of the scoping process the Commission will use to gather input from the public and interested agencies on the project. Your input will help the Commission staff determine what issues they need to evaluate in the EA. Please note that the **scoping period will close on May 16, 2012**.

This notice is being sent to the Commission's current environmental mailing list for this project. State and local government representatives should notify their constituents of this planned project and encourage them to comment on their areas of concern.

Comments may be submitted in written form or verbally. Further details on how to submit written comments are provided in the Public Participation section of this notice. In lieu of or in addition to sending written comments, we<sup>2</sup> invite you to attend the public scoping meetings scheduled as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> A pipeline loop is a segment of pipe constructed parallel to an existing pipeline to increase capacity.

<sup>2</sup> "We", "us", and "our" refer to the environmental staff of the Office of Energy Projects (OEP).

Date and Time	Location
May 8, 2012 7:00 pm EDT	Oregon Ridge Lodge 13401 Beaver Dam Road Cockeysville, MD 21030
May 9, 2012 7:00 pm EDT	Youth's Benefit Elementary School Cafeteria 1901 Fallston Road Fallston, MD 21047

The public meetings are designed to provide you with more detailed information and another opportunity to offer your comments on the proposed project. Columbia representatives will be present **one hour before** each meeting to describe their proposal, present maps, and answer questions. Interested groups and individuals are encouraged to attend the meetings and to present comments on the issues they believe should be addressed in the EA. A transcript of each meeting will be made so that your comments will be accurately recorded.

If you are a landowner receiving this notice, you may be contacted by a pipeline company representative about the acquisition of an easement to construct, operate, and maintain the planned facilities. The pipeline company would seek to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement. However, if Line MB is approved by the Commission, that approval conveys with it the right of eminent domain. Therefore, if easement negotiations fail to produce an agreement, the pipeline company could initiate condemnation proceedings where compensation would be determined in accordance with state law.

A fact sheet prepared by the FERC entitled "An Interstate Natural Gas Facility On My Land? What Do I Need To Know?" is available for viewing on the FERC website ([www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov)). This fact sheet addresses a number of typically-asked questions, including the use of eminent domain and how to participate in the Commission's proceedings.

### **Summary of the Planned Project**

Columbia plans to construct about 21.3 miles of 26-inch-diameter pipeline in Baltimore and Harford Counties, Maryland to expand its existing natural gas transmission system. The new pipeline loop would primarily be installed within or adjacent to Columbia's existing rights-of-way.

The Line MB would consist of the following facilities:

- 21.3 miles of 26-inch-diameter pipeline;
- install pipeline pig<sup>3</sup> receivers at the Owing Mills Meter Station and the Rutledge Compressor Station; and
- install two mainline valves on its existing Line MA.

The general location of the project facilities is shown in appendix 1.<sup>4</sup>

### **Land Requirements for Construction**

The Applicant is still in the planning phase for the project, and workspace requirements have not been finalized. However, construction of the planned facilities would disturb about 297.6 acres of land for the aboveground facilities and the pipeline. Following construction, Columbia would maintain about 129.6 acres of land for permanent operation of the project's facilities; the remaining areas would be restored and revert to former uses. Most of the planned pipeline route parallels existing pipeline, utility, or road rights-of-way.

### **The EA Process**

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires the Commission to take into account the environmental impacts that could result from an action whenever it considers the issuance of a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity. NEPA also requires us to discover and address concerns the public may have about proposals. This process is referred to as scoping. The main goal of the scoping process is to focus the analysis in the EA on the important environmental issues. By this notice, the Commission requests public comments on the scope of the issues to address in the EA. We will consider all filed comments during the preparation of the EA.

In the EA we will discuss impacts that could occur as a result of the construction and operation of the planned project under these general headings:

- geology and soils;
- land use;

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<sup>3</sup> A "pig" is a tool that the pipeline company inserts into and pushes through the pipeline for cleaning the pipeline, conducting internal inspections, or other purposes.

<sup>4</sup> The appendices referenced in this notice will not appear in the Federal Register. Copies of the appendices were sent to all those receiving this notice in the mail and are available at [www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov) using the link called "eLibrary" or from the Commission's Public Reference Room, 888 First Street NE, Washington, DC 20426, or call (202) 502-8371. For instructions on connecting to eLibrary, refer to the last page of this notice.

- water resources, fisheries, and wetlands;
- cultural resources;
- vegetation and wildlife;
- air quality and noise;
- endangered and threatened species;
- public safety; and
- alternatives.

We will also evaluate possible alternatives to the planned project or portions of the project, and make recommendations on how to lessen or avoid impacts on the various resource areas. Alternatives are being considered along the proposed route between Garrison Forest Road and Shawan Road (Milepost 1.4 to 8.2) and between Mansel Drive and Joel Court (Milepost 5.0 to 6.0).

Although no formal application has been filed, we have already initiated our NEPA review under the Commission's Pre-filing process. The purpose of the Pre-filing process is to encourage early involvement of interested stakeholders and to identify and resolve issues before the FERC receives an application. As part of our Pre-filing review, we have begun to contact some federal and state agencies to discuss their involvement in the scoping process and the preparation of the EA. In addition, representatives from the FERC participated in public Open House meetings sponsored by Columbia in the project area in March 2012, to explain the environmental review process to interested stakeholders.

The EA will present our independent analysis of the issues. The EA will be available in the public record through eLibrary. Depending on the comments received during the scoping process, we may also publish and distribute the EA to the public for an allotted comment period. We will consider all comments on the EA before we make our recommendations to the Commission. To ensure we have the opportunity to consider and address your comments, please carefully follow the instructions in the Public Participation section.

With this notice, we are asking agencies with jurisdiction and/or special expertise with respect to the environmental issues to formally cooperate with us in the preparation of the EA<sup>5</sup>. These agencies may choose to participate once they have evaluated the proposal relative to their responsibilities. Agencies that would like to request cooperating agency status should follow the instructions for filing comments provided under the Public Participation section of this notice. Currently, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has expressed its intention to participate as a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EA to satisfy its NEPA responsibilities related to this project.

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<sup>5</sup> The Council on Environmental Quality regulations addressing cooperating agency responsibilities are at Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 1501.6.

## **Consultations Under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act**

In accordance with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's implementing regulations for section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, we are using this notice to initiate consultation with applicable State Historic Preservation Office(s), and to solicit their views and those of other government agencies, interested Indian tribes, and the public on the project's potential effects on historic properties.<sup>6</sup> We will define the project-specific Area of Potential Effects (APE) in consultation with the SHPO(s) as the project develops. On natural gas facility projects, the APE at a minimum encompasses all areas subject to ground disturbance (examples include construction right-of-way, contractor/pipe storage yards, compressor stations, and access roads). Our EA for this project will document our findings on the impacts on historic properties and summarize the status of consultations under section 106.

## **Currently Identified Environmental Issues**

We have already identified several issues and alternatives that we think deserve attention based on a preliminary review of the proposed facilities, comments made to us at the Applicant's open houses, preliminary consultations with other agencies, and the environmental information provided by Columbia. This preliminary list of issues may change based on your comments and our analysis.

- construction constraints;
- impacts on residential communities; and
- route alternatives.

## **Public Participation**

You can make a difference by providing us with your specific comments or concerns about the project. Your comments should focus on the potential environmental effects, reasonable alternatives, and measures to avoid or lessen environmental impacts. The more specific your comments, the more useful they will be. To ensure that your comments are timely and properly recorded, please send your comments so that they will be received in Washington, DC **on or before May 16, 2012**.

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<sup>6</sup> The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regulations are at Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 800. Those regulations define historic properties as any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register for Historic Places.

For your convenience, there are three methods you can use to submit your comments to the Commission. In all instances, please reference the project docket number (PF12-6-000) with your submission. The Commission encourages electronic filing of comments and has expert eFiling staff available to assist you at (202) 502-8258 or [efiling@ferc.gov](mailto:efiling@ferc.gov).

- 1) You may file your comments electronically by using the Quick Comment feature, which is located at [www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov) under the link called “[Documents and Filings](#).” A Quick Comment is an easy method for interested persons to submit text-only comments on a project;
- 2) You may file your comments electronically by using the “eFiling” feature that is listed under the “[Documents and Filings](#)” link. eFiling involves preparing your submission in the same manner as you would if filing on paper, and then saving the file on your computer’s hard drive. You will attach that file to your submission. New eFiling users must first create an account by clicking on the link called “[Sign up](#)” or “[eRegister](#).” You will be asked to select the type of filing you are making. A comment on a particular project is considered a “Comment on a Filing;” or
- 3) You may file a paper copy of your comments at the following address:

Kimberly D. Bose, Secretary  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE, Room 1A  
Washington, DC 20426

### **Environmental Mailing List**

The environmental mailing list includes federal, state, and local government representatives and agencies; elected officials; environmental and public interest groups; Native American Tribes; other interested parties; and local libraries and newspapers. This list also includes all affected landowners (as defined in the Commission’s regulations) who are potential right-of-way grantors, whose property may be used temporarily for project purposes, or who own homes within certain distances of aboveground facilities, and anyone who submits comments on the project. In addition, this list includes those that may be affected by a proposed alternative. We will update the environmental mailing list as the analysis proceeds to ensure that we send the information related to this environmental review to all individuals, organizations, and government entities interested in and/or potentially affected by the planned project.

If we publish and distribute the EA, copies will be sent to the environmental

mailing list for public review and comment. If you would prefer to receive a paper copy of the document instead of the CD version or would like to remove your name from the mailing list, please return the attached Information Request (Appendix 2).

### **Becoming an Intervenor**

Once Columbia files its application with the Commission, you may want to become an “intervenor” which is an official party to the Commission’s proceeding. Intervenor play a more formal role in the process and are able to file briefs, appear at hearings, and be heard by the courts if they choose to appeal the Commission’s final ruling. An intervenor formally participates in the proceeding by filing a request to intervene. Instructions for becoming an intervenor are in the User’s Guide under the “e-Filing” link on the Commission’s website. Please note that the Commission will not accept requests for intervenor status at this time. You must wait until the Commission receives a formal application for the project.

### **Additional Information**

Additional information about the project is available from the Commission’s Office of External Affairs, at (866) 208-FERC, or on the FERC website ([www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov)) using the eLibrary link. Click on the eLibrary link, click on “General Search” and enter the docket number, excluding the last three digits in the Docket Number field (i.e., PF12-6). Be sure you have selected an appropriate date range. For assistance, please contact FERC Online Support at [FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov](mailto:FercOnlineSupport@ferc.gov) or toll free at (866) 208-3676, or for TTY, contact (202) 502-8659. The eLibrary link also provides access to the texts of formal documents issued by the Commission, such as orders, notices, and rulemakings.

In addition, the Commission offers a free service called eSubscription that allows you to keep track of all formal issuances and submittals in specific dockets. This can reduce the amount of time you spend researching proceedings by automatically providing you with notification of these filings, document summaries, and direct links to the documents. Go to [www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm](http://www.ferc.gov/esubscribenow.htm).

Finally, public meetings or site visits will be posted on the Commission’s calendar located at [www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx](http://www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventsList.aspx) along with other related information.

Dated: April 16, 2012

Kimberly D. Bose,  
Secretary.

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